



State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services

DDS

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Commissioner

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Deputy Commissioner

**DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES TESTIMONY
BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
February 25, 2019**

Senators Abrams and Somers, Representatives Steinberg and Petit and members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Peter Mason and I am the Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). Thank you for the opportunity to testify on **Proposed S.B. No. 393 AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES' LEVEL OF NEED ASSESSMENT.**

This proposed bill would require DDS to update our level of need assessment tool to include the most recent medical information, policies and terminology regarding behavioral health.

Once an individual is determined eligible for DDS services, DDS case managers use a standardized assessment tool to assess each individual's level of need for DDS funding and services. The Connecticut Level of Need Assessment and Screening Tool was developed in conjunction with the University of Connecticut. The original web-based LON assessment tool was launched in 2008 and was funded through a Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Systems Change Grant.

This web-based tool assesses an individual's needs in key areas including, but not limited to: health and medical; personal care activities; daily living activities; behavior; safety; support for waking hours, overnight support, comprehension and understanding, communication; transportation; social life, recreation, community activities; and unpaid caregiver support. Utilizing a scoring algorithm, the individual's completed LON assessment is then given an overall score ranging from 0 to 8 (8 being the highest level of need).

Both the LON score and the information collected in the assessment is used to develop a comprehensive Individual Plan that identifies areas where the individual needs assistance to actualize his or her personal goals and that addresses any potential risks that could affect the individual's health and safety. This collaborative effort to develop an Individual Plan based on the LON assessment requires the individual, the individual's family, the DDS case manager, appropriate clinicians and other members of the individual's Planning and Support Team to engage directly to determine how and what funding and services are needed. Each plan is person-centered and created specifically for the individual based on the LON assessment and is reviewed and updated annually.

It is important for the department to stress that although the LON assessment is the primary tool for determining the needs of an individual eligible for DDS supports, there are further opportunities for individuals and their families to request additional funding and supports to assist with meeting needs that

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may not be measured by the LON's assessment. In addition, a LON review can be requested at any time to reflect an individual's changing needs.

The current LON assessment tool has provided the department with the ability to determine an individual's need for funding and supports in an equitable and consistent manner for all the persons that the department serves for the purposes of allocating DDS resources.

The department is open to discussing ways to improve the assessment tool and would be happy to engage with stakeholders on suggested changes or enhancements. In fact, over the years, improvements and changes to the LON have been implemented after stakeholder input identified areas of the LON that could be improved. However, in this difficult fiscal climate, the department would be unable to support any changes to the LON assessment tool that would incur cost.

Thank you again for the opportunity to offer testimony regarding **Proposed [S.B. No. 393](#) AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES' LEVEL OF NEED ASSESSMENT.**

I would be happy to answer any questions you have at this time. You also may contact Krista Ostaszewski, DDS Director of Legislative Affairs at (860) 418-6066 with additional questions.